

## **PRELIMINARY AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. **(previously presented)** A method wherein a customer, who could be a hearing impaired person, may place an operator assisted relayed telephone call to a hearing person using the internet such that the hearing impaired person communicates with the operator by sending and receiving text messages in approximately real time, and such that the hearing person communicates with the operator using conventional voice telephony, whereby the hearing impaired person may communicate with the hearing person using the operator as an intermediary, comprising:
  - a. the customer using his internet terminal to establish a secure connection to a Nationwide Routing Server;
  - b. the Nationwide Routing Server establishing a secure connection to the customer's internet terminal;
  - c. the customer issuing a call request via his internet terminal;
  - d. the Nationwide Routing Server issuing a status request packet to a TRS Packet Server;
  - e. the TRS Packet Server issuing a call accept packet to the Nationwide Routing Server;
  - f. the Nationwide Routing Server issuing a call accept packet to the customer's internet terminal;
  - g. the customer's internet terminal establishing a secure connection to the TRS Packet Server;
  - h. the TRS Packet Server establishing a secure connection to the customer's internet terminal;
  - i. the customer issuing a dial request packet to the TRS Packet Server via his internet terminal;
  - j. the TRS Packet Server issuing a call accept packet to the customer's internet terminal;
  - k. processing the call once the hearing person answers his or her phone;

- l. the customer communicating with a TRS operator by sending and receiving text via his internet terminal;
- m. the hearing person communicating with the operator using standard voice communications; and,
- n. the operator relaying messages between the customer and the hearing person.

2. **(previously presented)** A system wherein a customer, who could be a hearing impaired person, may place an operator assisted relayed telephone call to a hearing person using the internet such that the hearing impaired person communicates with the operator by sending and receiving text messages in approximately real time, and such that the hearing person communicates with the operator using conventional voice telephony, whereby the hearing impaired person may communicate with the hearing person using the operator as an intermediary, comprising a telecommunications relay service (TRS) operator station and terminal operatively connected to:

- a. a PBX unit that is operatively connected to a public switched telephone network using conventional telephone communications equipment; and,
- b. a local area network (TRS/LAN) that is operatively connected to:

- (1) a server that is operatively connected to the PBX unit using a data link; and,
- (2) the internet

such that the customer may communicate with the operator using either conventional telephone lines (POTS) or the internet and that said customer communication may be handled by an operator using the same TRS operator station and terminal regardless of

whether the customer communicates with the operator using POTS or the internet.

3. **(previously presented)** The system of claim 2 wherein the internet connection further comprises:
  - a. a connection to a nationwide TRS routing server; and,
  - b. a plurality of local TRS routing servers;wherein the nationwide TRS routing server receives call requests from special software installed on the customer's internet terminal and directs further customer communications to one of the plurality of local TRS routing servers.
4. **(newly presented)** The system of claim 3 wherein a first queue is created wherein the TRS operator handles POTS relay telephone calls in a first sequence and a second queue is created wherein the TRS operator handles internet relay telephone calls in a second sequence.
5. **(newly presented)** The system of claim 4 wherein the first queue and the second queue are combined into a single queue thereby allowing the TRS operator to handle calls in a combined sequence comprising both POTS relay telephone calls and internet relay telephone calls.